

Deputy Director of Security (PS)

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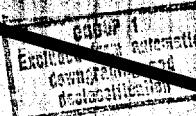
Chief, Interrogation Research Division

Interdepartmental Committee on the
Government Use of the Polygraph

1. This memorandum relates to the memorandum from the Director of Security to the Deputy Director for Support reporting on the initial meeting of the Staff Subcommittee of the subject Committee. Hopefully, it may contain a usable idea on the approach of the Staff Subcommittee to the problem.

2. The Committee on Government Operations in its Tenth Report recommended that the President create an interagency committee to study problems posed by the use of polygraphs and to work out solutions to those problems. Some of the problems which the Committee on Government Operations anticipated and some of the problems which the Committee on Government Operations referred to in the same report had to do with the initiation of research to determine the validity and reliability of polygraph examinations, improvement in training and qualifications of Federal polygraph operators, and insuring that polygraph examinations were in fact voluntary and that the refusal to take a polygraph examination would not be prejudicial to the person concerned except in the most serious national security cases. The Committee also recommended that the use of polygraphs in all but the most serious national security and criminal cases be prohibited and that use of two-way mirrors and recording devices be restricted.

3. Aside from the question of whether or not a polygraph procedure does what it is said to do, the basic questions appear to concern the indiscriminate use of the polygraph



and indiscriminate questioning by polygraph examiners. This is, the Committee on Government Operations was concerned that too much reliance was being based on the technique, the reliability of which has not been established to their satisfaction and there was too much variation in the use of the polygraph. The key portion of the Tenth Report of the Committee on Government Operations is that which states:

"The polygraph technique forces an individual to incriminate himself and confess to past actions which are not pertinent to the current investigation. He must dredge up his past so he can approach the polygraph machine with an untroubled soul. The polygraph operator and his superiors then decide whether to refer derogatory information to other agencies or officials."

4. It would appear, therefore, that one of the first orders of business would be to explore and come to agreement on what are legitimate topics for a polygraph examination. The actual questions asked in a polygraph examination are not so important. What is important is that the Staff Subcommittee of the Subject Committee know what the purpose of the polygraph examination is in each agency. The Defense directive is no real help in determining the Defense position inasmuch as, for example, the National Security Agency is authorized to conduct polygraph examinations as part of their security determination process. The Department of Defense directive does not say what are legitimate areas for coverage in such cases.

5. Even in CIA there is some problem in this area since we have not clearly defined our areas of interest and are periodically accused of delving too far in the sexual area.

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6. Probably prior to and possibly in conjunction with the first step mentioned above, one of the first steps should be a determination as to whether an individual is indeed testifying against himself and a further determination as to whether this is right or wrong. I do not feel that the question of signing a statement to the effect that the polygraph examination is voluntary enters into the question at this point inasmuch as very few, if any, people would take such an examination if it were in fact voluntary.

7. Part of the first step would also involve the approach of each agency to the matter of security interviews in general. This would involve study of just what are proper topics to be covered in security interviews in general whether or not a polygraph examination is also given. A security officer going into forbidden areas without a polygraph is no better and no worse than the security officer who is pursuing such matters in a pre-polygraph situation or following a reaction on a chart.

8. Early in the work of the Staff Subcommittee should be a discussion of what is a competent or proficient polygraph examiner. Most agencies have a statement regarding minimum qualifications for entering the field and a statement of the curriculum of their training course. These tell you what an individual must have been in order to be selected and tell you what he must study. They do not, however, tell you what the entrance standards are intended to establish nor what the training curriculum is designed to do to the individual.

9. The type of problem with which the Staff Subcommittee will be faced, I am sure, is reflected in the question we had from [redacted] some weeks ago. The question was in two parts. The first part was: how many cases did a man have to run to become a proficient polygraph examiner. The second part was: how many cases did a proficient polygraph examiner have to run in order to retain his proficiency. Probably

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these questions could be answered at some future date when some meaningful answer could be given to the question: what is a proficient polygraph examiner? Each agency probably has different definition of this. Probably each agency has a different idea of the role of the man administering polygraph examinations. The definitions could vary with the varied use which could range upward from the man who is called in to administer a polygraph test to the man who is handling a case and who uses the polygraph procedure as a test on his own handling of the case.

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